

„Information Processing Strategies of European Consumers with Regard to Traceability and Label Schemes”

Schaer B, Bauer C¹

¹ ECOZEPT GbR, Sustainability for the Food and Agricultural Sector, Oberer Graben 22, 85354 Freising, Germany. Tel +49(0)8161.1482-0 Fax +49(0)8161.1482-22
schaer@ecozept.com; bauer@ecozept.de

Abstract:

The wide dissemination of food scandals via media connected with a growing awareness of the close correlation between health and food consumption lead to an increasing uncertainty and discomfort on the part of the consumers. In consequence this development is an important driver for the establishment of “alternative” food supply chains that fulfil, from a consumers point of view, the requirements of food safety, traceability and quality assurance.

An aim of this presentation is to provide insight into the consumers’ information processing method regarding traceability. The personal and product specific involvement as well as the theory of perceived risk regarding food purchase and consumption help to explain under which conditions the consumers are motivated to pay attention to detailed information. Or if consumers prefer to orientate their purchase decisions on more simple “information chunks” (e.g. labels, brands). The many signals present on the market often give the impression that they rather contribute to the information overload than to reduce the perceived risk. Thus the European consumers are looking for meaningful and trustworthy quality indicators. The results are based on a series of parallel focus groups that were conducted in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Spain.

Keywords: traceability, buying behaviour, consumers’ information processing method, label schemes

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